MARINE WATER MONITORING

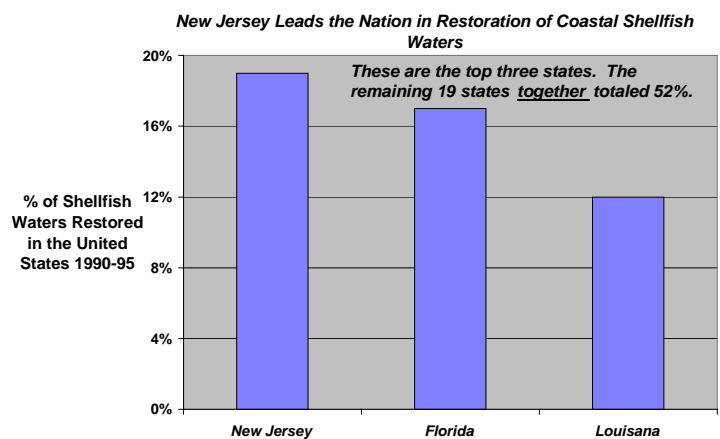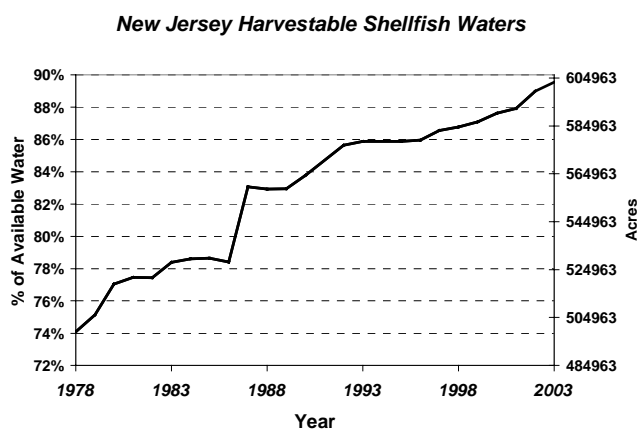# National Shellfish Sanitation Program

The national program was established by the Surgeon General in 1925 and is active in all coastal states involved in interstate shellfish harvest and sale. Its purpose is to regulate the harvest and sale of shellfish to safeguard the public health from the consumption of contaminated shellfish. The data from this program also supports a significant indicator of coastal water quality over time.

One portion of the program requires shellfish producing states to classify their coastal waters according to suitability for safe shellfish harvest. Part of the assessment of these waters for safe shellfish harvest involves the monitoring of pollutant levels in those waters. Of principal concern are indicators of human pathogens in the water that may be transmitted to consumers through the harvest of tainted shellfish. Each year the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring assesses the most recent water quality data and shoreline survey information for compliance with the National Shellfish Sanitation Program guidelines. Waters not in compliance are closed to shellfish harvest.

The Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring maintains a network of more than 2500 monitoring stations throughout the state's coastal waters. These stations are sampled between five and twelve times each year for total coliform and fecal coliform bacteria (indicators of human pathogens). The Bureau's staff at the Leeds Point, NJ facility analyzes the samples.

New Jersey has been very successful in improving water quality for shellfish harvesting. For 15 consecutive years, New Jersey has upgraded more waters that it has downgraded for shellfish harvesting. Currently, 90% of the State's shellfish waters are harvestable. As of the last national survey of shellfish waters in the United States, New Jersey was the leading state in the restoration of coastal shellfish waters.

Further information on this program and water quality results can be found on the Bureau's web page (www.state.nj.us/dep/wmm/bmw).

New Jersey Harvestable Shellfish Waters

New Jersey Leads the Nation in Restoration of Coastal Shellfish Waters

These are the top three states. The remaining 19 states together totaled 52%.

% of Shellfish Waters Restored in the United States 1990-95

Source: 1995 National Shellfish Register, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1997.

New Jersey's
2003 National Shellfish
Sanitation Program's
Monitoring Network

Pennsylvania

s   Monitoring Station
    Streams
    New Jersey
    Water
    Pennsylvania / Delaware

N

Sandy
Hook

Atlantic
City

- Approximately 2,500 active stations
- Approximately 17,000 water samples collected annualy for Fecal and Total Coliform analysis
- Performed as a requirement for the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP)

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Land Use Management
Water Monitoring & Standards
Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring

Delaware

0   8 Miles

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